'Death to Bundy!' Cries Prosecutor Before Executive Clemency Board

By Diana Smith
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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Theodore Robert Bundy is a mass murderer who may have killed 100 or more women nationwide and will kill again unless he is executed in Florida's electric chair, the state Board of Executive Clemency was told Wednesday.

Jack Poitinger, an assistant state attorney in Leon County, told the board that "Bundy is like a plague.

"Everywhere he goes death follows," Poitinger said "If this case is commuted to life in prison, he will survive that, and he will continue, like the plague, killing people."

The board heard arguments in a request for clemency for Bundy, sentenced to death for the grisly 1978 slayings of two Florida State University sorority sisters and the rape and murder of a 12-year-old school girl.

Bundy, 39, was described as a cold-blooded but intelligent killer who randomly targeted women of a similar physical type, usually women with dark hair parted down the middle. He murdered them by bludgeoning and strangulation.

His side was not argued in the hearing because Bundy, now being held in the state's maximum security prison near Starke, fired his court-appointed attorney last week. It was the third time the hearing had been delayed.

"We will not permit our judicial system to be endlessly manipulated." Gov. Bob Graham said in giving Bundy 30 days to file written briefs in his own behalf.

Graham and the independently elected, six-member Cabinet sit as the clemency board and have the power to grant pardons, commutations and reprieves. They routinely hear all death penalty cases that have been upheld by the Florida Supreme Court.

No decision was made immediately, but Robert Harper, Bundy's former attorney, said he expected the governor to sign a death warrant authorizing Bundy's execution in 30 to 60 days.

It would be Bundy's first death warrant, and inmates in Florida are rarely executed until a third warrant has been signed. Bundy has yet to appeal his death sentences in the federal courts.

Poitinger, who at the time of the crimes was chief of detectives for the Leon County Sheriff's Department, also helped fellow Assistant State Attorney Tony Guarisco trace Bundy's suspected crimes in other states, including Washington, Oregon, Utah and Colorado. He was an escapee from Colorado when he was caught in Florida.